

Long Range Building Plan testimony
HB5, hearing on Feb 6, 2007

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Anne Weber; I'm the chief of the Laboratory Services Bureau in the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

Our laboratory is housed in the Cogswell Building on the 1st and 2nd floors of the B-wing. The Cogswell Building is located one block east of the south side of the Capitol. The Laboratory Services Bureau provides laboratory support for public health programs in Montana for both clinical testing, which involves samples from humans, and environmental testing, which involves samples from water, soil or air.

The focus of the funding request today is for the area of the laboratory doing environmental tests. In this area, we do water testing under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and the state Clean Water Act. We provide testing to public water supplies, such as cities and towns, restaurants, subdivisions and trailer courts, and also to private individuals for their personal wells. Examples of the types of tests we provide include analysis for organic chemicals, heavy metals, nitrates, and coliform bacteria. We provide emergency analysis for any chemical spill that may be thought to be a public health threat, and we are also the laboratory responsible for public health preparedness for chemical terrorism. Preparedness is an important aspect of the services we provide, and conducting routine analyses, using modern equipment, on a daily basis, is the best way to enhance our preparedness efforts.

The laboratory facility in the Cogswell Building has not been significantly improved since it was built in the mid-1950's. We are requesting funding to bring the electrical and air handling systems up to current standards, to replace deficient laboratory fume hoods that may pose a safety hazard to laboratory staff, and to replace outdated laboratory benches that don't allow for effective use of modern analytical equipment. We've had an architect draw up the plans for these improvements, and the amount of our funding request is based on those plans and cost estimates.


In the last 5 years, we were able to remodel a portion of the clinical laboratory and a portion of the environmental laboratory using federal funds from the Public Health Preparedness grant. Unfortunately, this source of federal funds has been steadily decreasing and the current monies are not sufficient to bring the remainder of the environmental laboratory up to date.

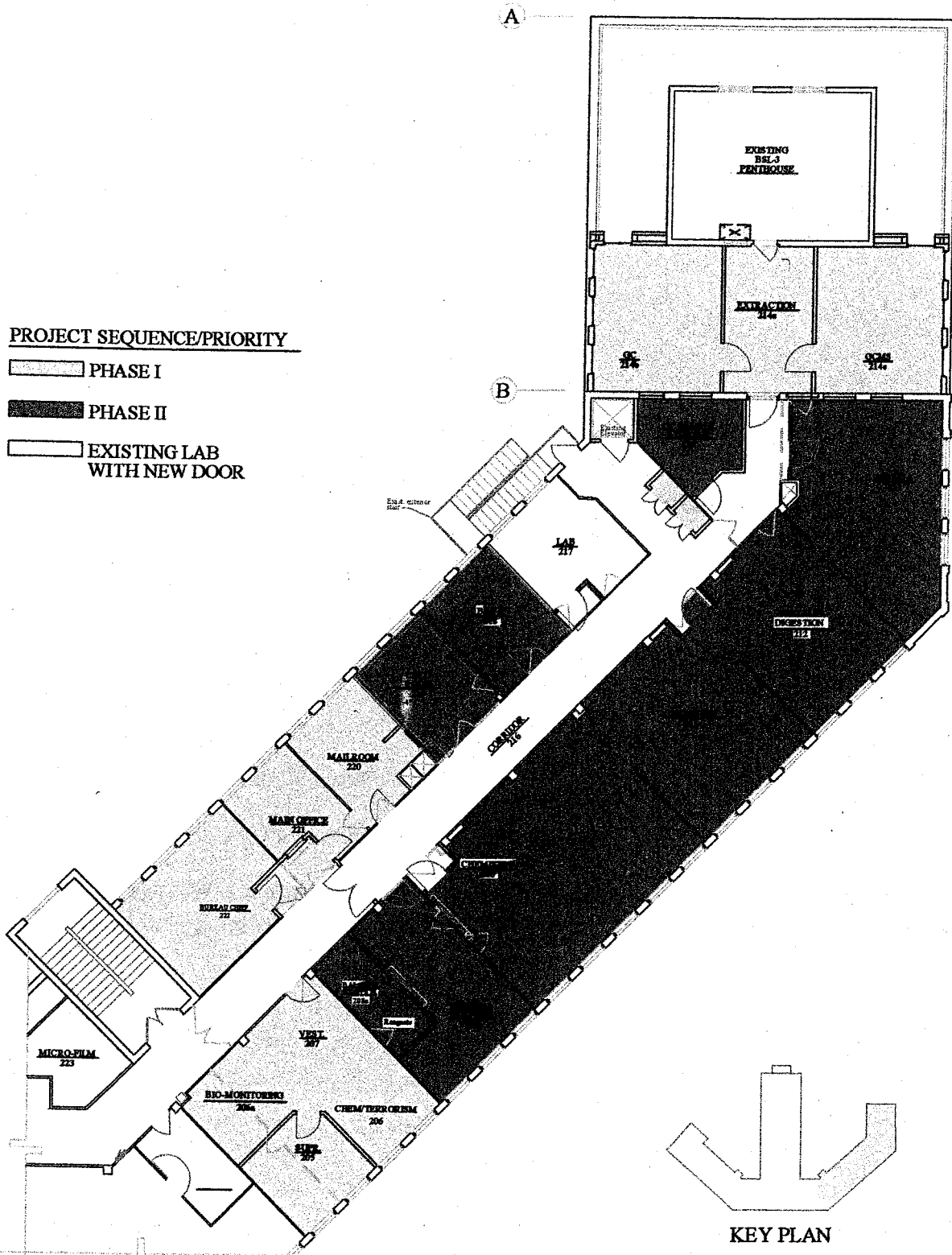
The expected cost for the final phase of the environmental laboratory is 2 million dollars. We are requesting half of that amount in state general fund, and half in federal spending authority. Thank you for your consideration, and I'll be available for any questions.

PROJECT SEQUENCE/PRIORITY

 PHASE I

 PHASE II

 EXISTING LAB WITH NEW DOOR



1 SECOND FLOOR PLAN - PHASING



CIVIC design, LLC
ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY
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**ENVIRONMENTAL
LAB REMODEL**
Concept Design May 24, 2005